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MEDIA RELEASE

NSROC COUNCILS UNIFIED IN FIGHTING FRANK

Seven Northern Sydney councils have agreed to combat the State Government's attempts to slash funding for community infrastructure and take control of millions of dollars already collected for this purpose by Councils.

The councils have taken this step in response to the Planning Minister Frank Sartor announcing he will bring in legislation restricting the ability of councils to raise infrastructure funding and compelling councils into giving over money to the state government which has been collected for regional facilities such as libraries, pools, sports centres and community centres.

The Planning Minister is also seeking to dramatically limit the way in which regional infrastructure funds raised by councils can be spent, ruling out building regional facilities and renewing existing facilities. He has stated his intent is to reduce costs of construction for new dwellings but no method by which any savings might be passed on to the eventual owner have been identified.

At the board meeting of the Northern Sydney Regional Organisation of Councils on 14 February it was unanimously agreed that the member councils would refuse to cooperate with the state government if they were ordered to transfer money collected from developers to fund community infrastructure into the hands of the Treasury.

The councils also agreed to a range of additional actions including a 'regional day of action', a co-ordinated media campaign and direct lobbying of state representatives in order to persuade the state government not to proceed with its controversial legislation.

The councils' actions are part of a state wide fight to protect the funding which has proved vital in providing the community infrastructure necessary to accommodate growing populations.

The President of NSROC and Mayor of Willoughby Council, Councillor Pat Reilly, said that the State Government could not be trusted with the money, and that it should be left in the hands of local government which had a long track history in delivering infrastructure outcomes that their communities have identified and planned for.

'This is no more than the Planning Minister filling the coffers of treasury with money that rightly belongs to the community and should stay under council control. The communities will suffer and the only people I see benefiting from this will be the developers' he added.

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